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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

 (currently amended): A ceramic honeycomb structure comprising a ceramic honeycomb body comprising axial grooves on its periphery and cell walls constituting a larger number of flow paths inside said grooves, and a peripheral wall layer covering said grooves, wherein there are stress release portions at least partially in said peripheral wall layer and/or between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves.

Claims 2. - 22. (canceled).

- 23. (withdrawn): A method for producing a ceramic honeycomb structure comprising a ceramic honeycomb body comprising axial grooves on its periphery and cell walls constituting a larger number of flow paths inside said grooves, and a peripheral wall layer covering said grooves, comprising the steps of shaping a soft ceramic material by extrusion and drying it to form a ceramic honeycomb green body, removing a peripheral wall from said ceramic honeycomb green body to form a ceramic honeycomb body, and forming said peripheral wall layer on said ceramic honeycomb body before or after firing said ceramic honeycomb body.
- 24. (withdrawn): The method according to claim 23, wherein said green body is fired in a state where said ceramic honeycomb green body is placed on a table with its one opening end abutting said table, and a portion of said green body adjacent to said table is then cut.
- 25. (withdrawn): The method according to claim 24, wherein said peripheral wall is removed in a green body portion adjacent to said table according to a dimensional change predicted by firing.

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26. (withdrawn): The method according to claim 23 to 25, wherein said ceramic honeycomb body is made of cordierite, and wherein said peripheral wall layer is formed by a coating material comprising 100 parts by mass of amorphous silica particles and 2 to 35 parts by mass (on a solid basis) of colloidal silica and/or colloidal alumina.

Claim 27. (canceled).

- 28. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 1, which further has stress release portions at least partially in said peripheral wall layer.
- 29. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 28, wherein said stress release portions are voids provided in said peripheral wall layer such that they are open on a periphery thereof.
- 30. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 29, wherein the total length of said voids is equal to or larger than the full length of said ceramic honeycomb structure.
- 31. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 29, wherein voids provided in said peripheral wall layer are in the form of a slit.
- 32. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 29, wherein voids provided in said peripheral wall layer are cracks in said peripheral wall layer.
- 33. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 1, wherein said stress release portions are voids provided between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves.
- 34. (currently amended): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 38, wherein the number of grooves having said voids between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves is 5% or more of the number of the total grooves.
- 35. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 34, wherein the total length of a contact portion of the grooves with the peripheral wall layer is 95% or less based on the total length of the grooves.

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36. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 28, wherein said stress release portions are voids provided between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves.

- 37. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 36, wherein the number of grooves having said voids between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves is 5% or more of the total number of the grooves.
- 38. (new): A ceramic honeycomb structure comprising a ceramic honeycomb body comprising axial grooves on its periphery and cell walls constituting a larger number of flow paths inside said grooves, and a peripheral wall layer covering said grooves, wherein the thermal expansion coefficient of said peripheral wall layer is smaller than those of said cell walls in a radial direction.

wherein said peripheral wall layer has a composition comprising 100 parts by mass of amorphous silica and 2 to 35 parts by mass of an amorphous oxide matrix and said amorphous silica has a thermal expansion coefficient of 10.0×10^{-7} /°C or less.

- 39. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 38, comprising stress release portions at least partially between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves.
- 40. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 39, wherein said stress release portions are voids provided between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves.
- 41. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 40, wherein the number of grooves having said voids between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves is 5% or more of the total number of the grooves.
- 42. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 40, wherein the total length of a contact portion of the grooves with the peripheral wall layer is 95% or less based on the total length of the grooves.

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43. (new): A ceramic honeycomb structure comprising a ceramic honeycomb body comprising axial grooves on its periphery and cell walls constituting a larger number of flow paths inside said grooves, and a peripheral wall layer covering said grooves, said ceramic honeycomb body being obtained by removing a peripheral wall and nearby cell walls before firing.

- 44. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 43, wherein said peripheral wall layer has a composition comprising 100 parts by mass of amorphous silica and 2 to 35 parts by mass of an amorphous oxide matrix and said amorphous silica has a thermal expansion coefficient of 10.0×10^{-7} /°C or less.
- 45. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 43, wherein there are stress release portions at least partially between said peripheral wall layer and said grooves.
- 46. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 45, which further has stress release portions at least partially in said peripheral wall layer.
- 47. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 1, wherein said peripheral wall layer is formed before or after firing said ceramic honeycomb body.
- 48. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 47, wherein said ceramic honeycomb structure has an isostatic strength of 1.5 MPa or more.
- (new): A particulates-capturing filter using a ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 1.
- (new): A particulates-capturing filter using a ceramic honeycomb structure according to claim 33.
- 51. (new): The ceramic honeycomb structure according to any one of claims 28-30, 33-35, 38-41, 43-45 or 47-53, wherein said cell walls of said ceramic honeycomb structure have a porosity of 50 to 80% and an average pore size of 10 to 50 μ m.

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52. (new): A ceramic honeycomb structure comprising a ceramic honeycomb body comprising axial grooves on its periphery and cell walls constituting a larger number of flow paths inside said grooves, and a peripheral wall layer covering said grooves, wherein said peripheral wall layer is made of a mixture comprising amorphous silica particles and an amorphous oxide matrix, and wherein said amorphous oxide matrix is formed from colloidal silica and/or colloidal alumina, and

wherein said peripheral wall layer has a composition comprising 100 parts by mass of amorphous silica and 2 to 35 parts by mass of an amorphous oxide matrix and said amorphous silica has a thermal expansion coefficient of 10.0×10^{-7} /°C or less.

53. (new): A coating material for forming a peripheral wall layer of a ceramic honeycomb structure, comprising 100 parts by mass of amorphous silica and 2 to 35 parts by mass (on a solid basis) of colloidal silica and/or colloidal alumina, wherein said amorphous silica has a thermal expansion coefficient of 10.0×10^{-7} /°C or less, an average particle size of 1 to 100 um and an aspect ratio of 10 or less.